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**COMBINED GREETING CARD AND REPLY POSTCARD AND METHOD OF
COLLECTING RECIPIENTS CONTACT DETAILS USING SAME****CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION**

[0001] This application claims priority from U.S. patent application serial number 10/555,615 filed May 9, 2006. The foregoing application is incorporated in its entirety herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The invention relates to greeting cards. More particularly, the invention relates to greeting cards that incorporate a detachable reply postcard that can be used for advertising and marketing of goods and services.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Greeting cards have been used to send personal messages of congratulations, condolences, and holiday well-wishes. Likewise, postcards have been used as a convenient and inexpensive means of correspondence. Greeting cards and postcards are currently manufactured, packaged, and sold as separate, discrete units. Conventionally, greeting cards and postcards are not manufactured, packaged, or sold as a single combined unit. Some greeting cards have additional panels or leaves that may be folded to form the card into an envelope. Conventional greeting cards also lack any means by which a card manufacturer or a card promoter, who can be a retailer or a manufacturer, can advertise to, market to, and collect the personal information of consumers for purposes of increasing sales and promoting the card manufacturer or card promoter's products and services. Traditional greeting cards and post cards do not provide a compact, convenient, and economical way for the card promoter to reach card recipients with its advertising and promotional campaigns so that the recipient can send a reply message, response, or personal details to the card promoter who is sponsoring a promotion that is the subject of the greeting card.

SUMMARY

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[0004] The invention described herein relates to a correspondence system that allows a card promoter to obtain a response or personal information from a recipient of a combined greeting card and reply postcard. In an exemplary embodiment, the card sender is an individual who obtains the card from a card promoter, e.g., a retailer or manufacturer, to send to the recipient. In another embodiment, the card sender and the card promoter may be the same business person or entity. The card promoter may be the card manufacturer or another retailer or manufacturer that sponsors a promotion that is indicated within the greeting card. The card sender may send the card to the recipient, who is another individual, to make a social expression such as a holiday greeting. The card promoter benefits from sponsoring the combined greeting card and reply postcard by being able to advertise and market the card promoter's goods or services. As an example, the card promoter may be the card manufacturer who wishes to collect personal information from the recipients of its cards after each card is sent to a recipient by a sender. This personal information may be used by the card promoter for advertising, marketing, promotions, or can be sold to a third party to be used for the third party's own advertising purposes.

[0005] Part of the card sender's advertising and marketing efforts may include permitting the recipient to enter into a promotion, for example, a sweepstakes or other game or contest, or to place a new order for one or more of the card sender's products or services. In another embodiment, the card sender is an individual who obtains the card from the card promoter for free or at reduced cost. The card is provided for free or at reduced cost by the retailer or manufacturer as an advertising and marketing tool in that the reply postcard may be returned by the recipient to the retailer or manufacturer, for example, the card manufacturer, so that the recipient may provide his or her personal information to the card manufacturer to register for a contest, to receive sales information, or for another promotion. In another embodiment, the card system permits the card promoter to collect data, such as personal information including but not limited to name, address, telephone number, facsimile number, email address, age, height, weight, gender, and amount of annual income that may be used to advertise and promote the card sender's products and services or the products and services of another.

[0006] The correspondence system features a single, unitary card that includes a greeting card and a reply postcard that is detachably connected to the greeting card. The correspondence

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system further features an envelope into which the card may be inserted for mailing or other delivery by a sender to a recipient. The reply postcard is detachable from the greeting card at a line of separation that may include perforations. The reply postcard may be separated from the greeting card at the separation line by manual tearing or by cutting using a cutting tool such as scissors. The card can include three leaves, two of which form the greeting card and one of which forms the reply postcard. One or more sides of each leaf may include artwork or printed indicia as well as blank spaces in which personal messages from a sender or a recipient may be written. Once detached from the greeting card, the reply postcard may be mailed by the recipient to the card promoter.

[0007] One advantage of the present invention is that the combined greeting card and reply postcard form a single, foldable card that is easily mailed or otherwise delivered in an envelope to a recipient.

[0008] Another advantage of the invention is that the reply postcard is easily detached from the greeting card so that the recipient may send a reply to the sender of the card.

[0009] Still another advantage of the invention is that the reply postcard can be detached and separated from the greeting card without creating any waste such as unused or excess pieces or panels of paper.

[0010] Yet another advantage of the invention is that the combined greeting card and reply postcard form a single unit that can be manufactured by publishers, displayed and sold by retailers, and sent by a sender and received by a recipient as one single unit. The recipient can then separate the reply post card from the greeting card so that each part retains its ability to fulfill its intended use. For example, after the reply postcard is detached from the greeting card by the recipient, the reply postcard can be used as a reply correspondence that is mailed or otherwise delivered back to the card promoter, and the greeting card may be retained complete and intact with its front and back cover for display and to be kept for sentimental reasons like any conventional greeting card.

[0011] Still another advantage of the combined greeting card and reply postcard is that where the card promoter wishes to make the recipient's reply convenient (and more likely), the card promoter may preprint the card promoter's address on the reply postcard portion of the card and affix the appropriate postage to the reply postcard so that the recipient may simply write his

or her reply message or personal information and mail the reply postcard without purchasing postage stamps.

[0012] One advantage of the method of the present invention is that the method permits the card promoter to advertise and promote the card promoter's products and services by virtue of the greeting card and to obtain personal information from the recipient that can be analyzed and used for future advertising and marketing campaigns or sold to a third party for similar purposes.

[0013] Accordingly, the invention features a correspondence system that includes a single, unitary card having a first leaf, a second leaf, and a third leaf. The card can be delivered by a sender to a recipient. The first leaf includes a front portion of a greeting card, and the second leaf, which is connected to the first leaf, includes a back portion of the greeting card. The third leaf is a reply postcard, which is detachably connected to either the first leaf or the second leaf. The third leaf also includes a card promoter's preprinted address and a space for the recipient to enter the recipient's information, which is to be returned to the card promoter via the reply postcard.

[0014] The invention also features an envelope into which the card can be inserted for mailing to the recipient.

[0015] The invention also features the first and second leaves together forming a first card that is the greeting card.

[0016] The invention also features the third leaf forming a second card that is the reply postcard.

[0017] The invention also features the recipient's information including one or more of the following: the recipient's personal information, contact information, order for the card promoter's product or service, or response to the card promoter's invitation on the reply postcard to enter into a promotional contest sponsored by the card promoter..

[0018] The invention also features the third leaf being detachable from the first or second leaves at a separation line.

[0019] The invention also features the separation line as a line of weakness, a line of perforations, or a printed dotted line. The reply postcard is separable from the greeting card at the separation line by manual tearing or by cutting with a cutting tool.

- [0020] The invention also features the reply postcard and the greeting card, once detached, forming two separate and complete units.
- [0021] The invention also features the greeting card forming a single unitary piece once it is detached from the reply postcard. The greeting card includes a front cover and a back cover.
- [0022] The invention also features the card, after separation, forming the greeting card and the reply postcard but no additional excess parts, panels or waste material.
- [0023] The invention also features the first, second, and third leaves being connected to one another in a horizontal configuration.
- [0024] The invention also features the first and second leaves being connected to one another in a horizontal configuration. The third leaf is connected to either the first leaf or the second leaf in a position that is perpendicular to the horizontal configuration of the first and second leaves.
- [0025] In another aspect, the invention features a method in which a single, unitary card is created that incorporates a greeting card and a detachable reply postcard. The card can be obtained by a card sender from a card promoter. The card can be delivered by a sender to a recipient. The recipient can detach the reply postcard from the greeting card and enter information provided onto the reply postcard. Once the recipient has completed entering the recipient's information onto the reply postcard, the detached reply postcard may be mailed from the recipient to the card promoter.
- [0026] Another method of the invention features the recipient's information including personal information provided by the recipient to the card promoter.
- [0027] Another method of the invention features the greeting card including a first leaf and a second leaf and the reply postcard comprises a third leaf that is detachably connected to one of the first leaf or the second leaf.
- [0028] Another method of the invention features the card promoter being either the card sender, a retailer, or a manufacturer.
- [0029] Still another method of the invention features the step of using the recipient's information by the card promoter to advertise and market the card promoter's products or services to the recipient.
- [0030] Still another method of the invention features the recipient's information being a

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a promotional contest sponsored by the card promoter upon receipt of the reply postcard by the card promoter from the recipient.

[0032] Yet another method of the invention features the step of delivering advertisements from the card promoter to the recipient, which concern the card promoter's product or service upon receipt of the reply postcard by the card promoter from the recipient.

[0033] Yet another method of the invention features the step of inserting the card into an envelope in which to deliver the card from the card sender to the recipient.

[0034] Yet another method of the invention features the step of selling the recipient's information to a third party upon receipt of the reply postcard by the card promoter from the recipient.

[0035] Unless otherwise defined, all technical terms used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art to which this invention belongs. Although methods and materials similar or equivalent to those described herein can be used in the practice or testing of the present invention, suitable methods and materials are described below. All publications, patent applications, patents and other references mentioned herein are incorporated by reference in their entirety. In the case of conflict, the present specification, including definitions will control.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0036] Figure 1 is a front planar view of a greeting card.

[0037] Figure 2 is a rear planar view of the greeting card of Figure 1.

[0038] Figure 3 is a front planar view of an alternate embodiment of a greeting card.

[0039] Figure 4 is a rear planar view of the alternate embodiment of the greeting card of Figure 3.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0040] In one aspect, the invention provides a correspondence system that can be a

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combined greeting card and reply postcard 10, which includes a greeting card 12, a reply postcard 14 that is detachably connected to the greeting card 12, and an envelope into which the card 10 can be inserted for mailing or other delivery by a card sender to a recipient. The card 10, which includes the greeting card portion 12 and the reply postcard 14, forms a single, unitary piece. The reply postcard 14 is detachable from the greeting card 12 at a line of separation 16 that may include perforations. Once detached and separated, the reply postcard 14 and greeting card 12 form two separate and complete units each of which is intact. As shown in Figures 1 and 2, the card 10 may include a plurality of leaves that can be foldable and that form a first card (the greeting card) 12 and a second card (the reply postcard) 14. The greeting card 12 can include at least two first card leaves, while the reply postcard can include at least one second card leaf. The second card leaf is detachably connected to one of the two first card leaves. Both the greeting card and the reply postcard can be used by an individual to send a message or to express some sentiment to another person or entity.

[0041] The envelope, which is not shown in the drawings, may be any standard envelope used for the delivery or mailing of greeting cards and other types of correspondence.

[0042] In an exemplary embodiment, the card sender is an individual. The recipient can be a different individual to whom the combined greeting card and reply postcard 10 is delivered by the card sender to express some social sentiment or message. In one embodiment, the combined greeting card and reply postcard can be provided free or at reduced price to card senders who are individuals by a card promoter who is a retailer or manufacturer. The card promoter may effectively sponsor the card as a marketing tool to encourage the recipient to return the reply postcard returned to the card promoter. In an exemplary embodiment, the reply postcard is designed to be returned by the recipient to the card's manufacturer or retailer.

[0043] In alternate embodiments, the card sender can be a greeting card manufacturer or another retailer or manufacturer who wishes to advertise, market, and promote its company, products, or services. For example, some retailers may wish to send birthday cards to their customers containing coupons for purposes of further advertising the retailer's products or services.

[0044] In the exemplary embodiment shown in Figures 1 and 2, the card 10 features a first leaf 18, a second leaf 20, and a third leaf 22. The first leaf 18 can be a front portion, or front

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cover 24, of the greeting card 12, and the second leaf 20, which is connected to the first leaf 18, can be a back portion, or back cover 26, of the greeting card. The third leaf 22 is the reply postcard 14, which is detachably connected to either the first leaf 18 or the second leaf 20. In one embodiment, a front side 18a of the first leaf 18 may include artwork 28 and printed indicia 30, for example, a greeting such as "Happy Birthday" or "Congratulations" or advertising information or messages such as "Holiday Sale Begins Monday." A rear side 18b of the first leaf 18 may be blank or may also include artwork 28 and/or printed indicia 30. The sender may manually write or mechanically print thereon a personalized message to the recipient on the rear side of the first leaf although typically a sender's personalized message is written on the second leaf of the greeting card.

[0045] In one embodiment, the greeting card 12 may include more than two leaves, for example, three, four, five, or more leaves. In embodiments where the greeting card includes more than two leaves, the leaves may be folded so that the multiple leaves are overlying to reduce the size (length and width) of the reply postcard to the size of a single leaf.

[0046] In an exemplary embodiment, the reply postcard 14 includes only one leaf. In other embodiments, the reply postcard may include more than one leaf, for example, two, three, four, or more leaves, which may be folded so that the multiple leaves are overlying to reduce the size (length and width) of the reply postcard to the size of a single leaf.

[0047] A front side 20a of the second leaf 20 may also include artwork 28 and printed indicia 30. In an exemplary embodiment, the front side 20a of the second leaf 20 includes one or more blank spaces 34 within which a sender of the card can write, type, or otherwise insert a personalized message to the recipient of the card. A rear side 20b of the second leaf 20 may feature artwork 28 and printed indicia 30 and may further include important information 32 such as name of the card promoter or card manufacturer, contact information for the card promoter or card manufacturer, website address for the card promoter or card manufacturer, copyright notices and credits for the artwork and printed indicia, card price, and a bar code. Together, the first and

second leaves 18 and 20 form a first card that is the greeting card 12. The reply postcard 14 forms a second card that is the reply postcard 14. The reply postcard 14 may be connected to the first card 12 by a hinge 22.

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advertising information. In one embodiment, the front side 22a of the reply postcard 14 may further include lines 36 or blank space to indicate where the recipient is directed to enter the recipient's personal information or response, e.g., whether the recipient wishes to order additional products or services, enter a promotion hosted by the card promoter, or renew a subscription for a product or service that is set to expire. The recipient may also write, type, or otherwise insert a personalized message to the card promoter or to another person or entity to whom the reply postcard is to be delivered. For example, the card promoter may be an advertising company while the reply postcard includes a preprinted return address so that the recipient may return the reply postcard directly to a retailer or manufacturer by whom the card promoter is employed.

[0049] The rear side 22b of the reply postcard 14 features the return address of the card promoter or the address where the card promoter desires that the recipient send a reply to, so that the recipient may reply to the promoter's request for personal information or respond to a promotion as presented in the greeting card or on the reply postcard itself.

[0050] In an exemplary embodiment, shown in figure 2, the front side 22a of the reply postcard 14 features a printed form with headings and lines or blank spaces after these headings so that a recipient may fill out information requested by the card promoter.

[0051] The artwork 28 and printed indicia 30 of the greeting card 12 and the reply postcard 14 may be directed to any suitable event or special occasion or purpose. Suitable events and special occasions include but are not limited to store sales, subscription renewal notices, product reorder requests, advertising and marketing products and services, holidays, birthdays, births, deaths, weddings, engagements, graduations, and promotion and contest entries. The artwork and printed indicia may also be generic so that the greeting card and reply postcard serve as means of delivering a written message or other social expression from the sender to the

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recipient. In an exemplary embodiment, the artwork and printed indicia relate to advertising information and images for the products and services of the card sender.

[0052] The separation line 16 as a line of weakness, a line of perforations, or a printed dotted line. The reply postcard 14 is separable from the greeting card 12 at the separation line 16 by manual tearing or by cutting with a cutting tool. After separation, the greeting card 12 and the reply postcard 14 do not form any additional excess parts, panels or waste material.

[0053] In one embodiment, the first, second, and third leaves 18, 20, and 22 can be connected to one another in a horizontal configuration as shown in Figures 1 and 2.

[0054] In another embodiment shown in Figures 3 and 4, first and second leaves 46 and 48 of a greeting card 42 can be connected to one another in a horizontal configuration while a third leaf 50, which forms a reply postcard 44, can be connected to either the first leaf 46 or the second leaf 48 at a separation line 52 and in a position that is perpendicular to the horizontal configuration of the first and second leaves.

[0055] As shown in Figures 1 and 3, the greeting card 12 may include price code information 54 related to the cost of the card on the second leaf 20, 48.

[0056] The card 10 can be constructed from any suitable material including but not limited to paper, cardboard, plastic, wood, and metal. The first, second, and third leaves 18, 20, and 22 may also feature additional card elements such as artwork, alphanumeric characters, printed indicia, and space for artwork, alphanumeric characters, and printed indicia. The artwork 28 can be an original or reproduction of a drawing, painting, wood print, photograph, or any other suitable visual art or image.

[0057] In one embodiment, the greeting card portion 12 of the card 10 may also feature one or more visual display or sound playback devices including but not limited to a light such as light emitting diodes (LEDs), an electronic memory device, and a sound synthesizer for the playback of voice, music, or another sound recording stored on the electronic memory device. In another embodiment, the reply postcard portion 14 of the card 10 may also contain one of the visual display or sound playback devices described herein.

[0058] In another aspect, the invention features a method in which a single, unitary card 10 is created that incorporates a greeting card 12 and a detachable reply postcard 14. The card can be inserted into an envelope and delivered by a sender to a recipient. The card may be

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